



Milwaukee LGBT History Project, Inc.

Eldon Murray

"All through history it has been those whose views and lives have been unorthodox who have had the most profound effect on their time. The world has relied on the genius of the individual, even when eccentric or deviant, to lead the way, but then it has said 'Look at him. He's just like me.' Until recently, Black heroes were omitted from the history books, their accomplishments being ignored entirely. Blacks are busy putting [themselves] back into the pages of history. We must do the same thing ... We must remove the whitewash carefully so that the true picture will emerge and gays both historic and modern can take their rightful place." – Eldon E. Murray, GPU News, March 1973

In 2007, Milwaukee and the nation have lost a true pioneer in the gay rights movement. Beginning in the late 1960s, when being gay was still a taboo to many, Eldon was proud of who he was, setting an example and freeing many other gay men and women to follow as they themselves "came out". Locally he founded numerous gay/lesbian organizations, many of which were "firsts" nationally. He has often been named and recognized throughout the country as one of just 5 or 6 people nationally who truly made the gay rights movement of the 1960s-1970s come about. Born in Vincennes, Indiana, Eldon said, "I've been Gay for as long as I can remember. It was always the prince in the fairy tale that interested me. He was the one who went out and did wonderful things."

Eldon was proud to be a leader in the gay rights movement nationally and locally. He formed the first radio broadcast program "Gay Perspective" in the early 1970s; helped establish the Brady Street Clinic and was an adviser in the early days of the Milwaukee AIDS Project. He was involved in the Gay Liberation Front at a time when people never used their real names. He was one of the founders of the Gay People's Union, the first major gay liberation organization in Milwaukee. IN 1994, he founded SAGE Milwaukee (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), which was Wisconsin's first organization devoted to issues surrounding aging in the community.

Eldon received numerous awards and recognition for his efforts in the gay community, including the One Institute and International Gay and Lesbian Archives as one of 31 pioneers in the gay movement. Eldon has said that Stonewall was a turning point for him. His ability to stand up and be openly gay launched a remarkable string of projects that established a legacy still felt today. His integrity resonates and will live on in the countless lives he embraced.

"It is not what life does for you, but what you do with life that counts."
– Eldon E. Murray